The experience gained during the mobilization of formations has enabled the Army to reassess and revalidate its operational plans and procedures.

MIG-21 crash in Ambala and Rajasthan

152. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two MIG-21 aircrafts crashed on September 9, 2002, one at Ambala and the other in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the causes of the crash and whether they were attributale to mechanical defects;

(c) whether in view of the fact that MIG aircrafts have been named as flying coffins, Government have reviewed the desirability of continuing to fly them and use them as combat aircraft; and

(d) if so, the outcome of the review?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The exact causes are being determined by the Courts of Inquiry.

(c) and (d) The view that the MIG-21 is a flying coffin is not correct. The aircraft is fully airworthy and reliable.

However, progressive phasing out of older variants of MIG-21 has already commenced.

Venkataswami Commission Report

153. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Venkataswami Commission probing into the so called "Tehelka" defence deal, has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the main finding thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Purchase of Admiral Gorshkov

154. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reached a negotiation with the Russians for the purchase of the Admiral Gorshkov Aircraft Carrier;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) has been signed on 4th October, 2000 with the Government of the Russian Federation which, *inter-alia*, provides for the acquisition of "Admiral Gorshkov", an aircraft carrier, from Russia and its refit and modernisation. Negotiations for procurement of Admiral Gorshkov are being held.

Clearance to Vallarpadam container terminal project

155. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the requisite clearance for the Vallarpadam container terminal project was sought from the Indian Navy long before; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if the clearance is not given so far, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

On March 22, 2002, clearance was sought for installation of cranes of 120 metre height at the Project site. The matter is under consideration of the Ministry.